

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Role of the Hunter

"A good news story, and a great one, is North America's continental system of wildlife conservation. It is the only sizable system of sustainable natural resources development. It is a significant creator of wealth and employment and a great contributor to our quality of life. It is the greatest environmental success story of this century and an outstanding cultural achievement of North American society. While widely admired and imitated beyond North America, it is poorly understood and ill appreciated in the U.S. and Canada itself, including wildlife biologists and managers." — V. Geist, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science, The University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 1998.

The above quote from one of the foremost writers of scientific information on wild sheep in North America and an immigrant from Europe sums up the view held by learned men from outside of our own continent. Why is it that the media and public here in our country do not understand and appreciate this success story that could not have become a reality without the tremendous contribution of energy, resources and volunteerism on the part of hunter-conservationists like you and me? The media chooses to ignore this phenomena under the guise of political correctness but there is no excuse for us.

"The greatest environmental success story of the twentieth century is the return of wildlife—and wild sheep—in North America. The wildlife we currently enjoy and take for granted is not merely a gift of nature but is wildlife restored and returned due to the effort of three generations of North Americans." — Dr. Dale E. Towell, Wildlife Program Coordinator, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 1998.

This quote coming from one of our leading wild sheep biologists is something for which we can all be proud. Spurred on by our great conservation leader,

Teddy Roosevelt, who formed the Boone and Crockett Club in the late eighteen hundreds, the proliferation of organizations formed by hunter-conservationists, dedicated to the mission of restoring and conserving wildlife and their habitat, reads like the ABC's: A - Audubon Society (1897); B - Boone and Crockett Club (1887); C - Camp Fire Club of America (1897); D - Ducks Unlimited (1937); F - Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (1977); R - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (1984) and the list goes on. You fill in the blanks. There is a highly motivated hunter-conservation group for almost every letter in the alphabet and this is the remarkable phenomenon we want to highlight.

Combined, these organizations represent millions of dedicated volunteers who are willing to supply the energy, resources and time that has been needed to bring wildlife in North America from the brink of extinction to its present state of abundance. Who are these people and what moves them to this great cause?

You have already read a great deal about them in previous issues of *Fair Chase*. Mostly, they are hunters, but not all. Their economic status ranges all the way from those who can only afford a hunting license to our great philanthropic donors who relish in their ability to literally give millions for this cause. They are volunteers, who come from all walks of life, who dedicate much of their discretionary time to serving on the boards of these societies, writing for their publications, going to meetings to spread the word, doing hands-on projects. They are biologists, wildlife managers, state and federal employees, and ranchers. Many are company employees and there are executives as well.

Despite the valiant efforts of Roosevelt, Grinnell, Pinchot, Hornaday and the other pioneers, the decline of wildlife numbers

continues into the early twentieth century. This situation called for extraordinary measures and sportsmen used their political influence to create a powerful source of funding to help wildlife. They arranged for a bill in Congress that earmarked a tax on sporting guns for the purchase of hunting preserves. Fortunately this bill, modeled after Old World hunting ideas, failed, but the idea lived on and later became the Pittman-Robertson Act that was signed into law in 1937.

Ironically, this bill, that restricted the use of hunting license fees to purposes of administration of state game and fish agencies, fulfilling the mandate proclaimed by Teddy Roosevelt 50 years earlier, "...that management of wildlife was to be based on best science and scholarship available," was signed by one of his descendants, Franklin D. Roosevelt. It precluded the use of these funds for enforcement activities and required wildlife restoration using habitat acquisition, development and most importantly, research.

Thus hunters not only provided resources through hunting license fees but also taxed themselves in order to create the essence of this success—the science of wildlife biology. Wildlife biology in the 1930s was a new science in need of basic research and education. Pittman-Robertson and other laws created and funded professional schools and research programs. Newly trained scientists soon began providing key information on different species that advanced management and began the recovery of American wildlife.



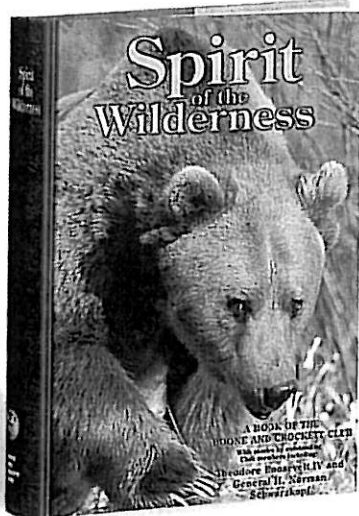
Daniel A. Pedrotti
President
Boone and Crockett Club

What are we to do to assure that this legacy, developed in the 19th century, handed over and greatly enhanced by us in the 20th, will be passed on to the generations of the 21st century?

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Spirit of the Wilderness

Stalking wild sheep, tracking a trophy cougar, hiking the back country of British Columbia, fishing for striped bass and coming face to face with a grizzly bear are some of the wilderness adventures found in *Spirit of the Wilderness*, a new 300-page hard cover book by Boone and Crockett Club.



General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Theodore Roosevelt IV (great grandson of President Roosevelt) headline the stories compiled by B&C editors as part of the Acorn Book Series. Schwarzkopf tells us about his efforts to reintroduce the grizzly bear into the lower 48 states as National Spokesperson for the movement, and Roosevelt tells how he taught his young son the value of catch and release while fishing for striped bass.

In addition to stories by Schwarzkopf and Roosevelt IV, other noted Boone and Crockett Club members contributing stories of hunting, fishing, hiking, exploration and adventure include Richard Borden (wildlife film maker for Walt Disney Company and National Geographic), Richard P. Carlsberg (noted sheep hunter), Prentiss N. Gray (first editor of the B&C records book, *Records of North American Big Game*), John M. Kauffmann (National Park Service executive), Dr. William MacCarty (surgeon) and Paul D. Webster (B&C president). Idaho wildlife artist Hayden Lambson created the cougar sketch etched in silver leaf on the book's cover. A four-color photograph of a massive grizzly bear, by Denver Bryan, graces the dust jacket.

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Call toll-free (888) 840-HUNT
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Spirit of the Wilderness!

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, 8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. MST
OR USE THE ORDER FORM LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF THIS ISSUE.

Imagine the power of such a dynamic force, created by the unification of the million or so members and resources of our "alphabet" of conservation organizations.

You would think that such an efficient and successful approach to the science of wildlife biology would flourish as long as man exists and wished to conserve our habitat and environment, but this institution, unique in the world, is in danger. As we read this essay, the greatest assemblage of wildlife scientists the world has ever known faces an uncertain future. Budget cuts in all

the wildlife agencies throughout the continent are forcing hard choices and it is even more tempting to reduce research and thus jobs for these highly qualified and motivated scientists.

So, in addition to population explosion, habitat loss to ranchettes, pressure from the radical animal rights groups and the large core of our population that is apathetic to our cause, we now have a threat to the scientific community that has helped achieve this era of abundance.

What are we to do to assure that this legacy, developed in the 19th century, handed over and greatly enhanced by us in the 20th, will be passed on to the generations of the 21st century? There are many possible scenarios and I am sure each of you have thought about this dilemma and have solutions of your own.

It would be impossible to ascertain the value provided by hunter-conservationists to the recovery of big game in North America. It is enormous, to say the least, and has also contributed greatly to non-game species as well. There is a saying, "Those that have the resources call the shots." We have provided the resources and have earned the right to call the

shots so let's get on with it.

Here is what I think. Today with millions of dedicated sportsmen and sportswomen supporting many diverse aspects of conservation, our best hope and our next challenge is to unite these diverse and dedicated efforts. Yesterday's obstacles were mainly ignorance and disregard for wildlife. Today's obstacles, in addition to those enumerated

above, are diffuse goals and even dissension among those who care deeply for wildlife. Many efforts have been made to bring this immense force together but some failed and others have seen only partial success.

Imagine the power of such a dynamic force, created by the unification of the million or so members and resources of our "alphabet" of conservation organizations. This effort would have access to huge sources of energy and the political impact could be astounding. We would then be fully equipped to overcome all obstacles. This force would assure us that generations of the future could enjoy a world characterized by the abundance of wildlife that we have worked so hard to conserve.

This unification of effort must happen if we are to preserve and bequeath our "wildlife cultural heritage"* to succeeding hunters and wildlife enthusiasts.

Who can provide the leadership as we roll into the next millennium? Can the Boone and Crockett Club, where it all started over 100 years ago, be the catalysts? Perhaps we ought to ask them?

*This phrase was coined by Mr. Ken Davis, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Board of Directors. ▲▲▲